

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of July 14, 2015**

- I. **ROLL CALL.** . Chair John Quinn III (8:22 p.m.), Selectmen Lynn Doney, Matthew Gadbois, Kenneth W. Goslant, and K. David Maxwell. Also present were Town Manager Jeffrey Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Utility Superintendent Patrick DeMasi, Ambulance Chief Lawton Rutter, Arlington Supplee (Board of Listers), Brandon Gallant (Northfield Ambulance Service), Mary Supplee, and Kathleen Lott (*Northfield News*).

Since Chair Quinn will be late attending tonight, Vice-Chair Maxwell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** The Board members and the public were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.
- III. **SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** There were no changes to the posted agenda.
- IV. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):** None.
- V. **DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS**

- a. **Utility Superintendent Patrick DeMasi.** Superintendent DeMasi reported that the water main installation project on Central and Washington streets is nearly complete. The new pipe has been put in place and the curbing is being prepared for sidewalk work next week. Selectman Maxwell asked if a top coat would be installed on the road. Superintendent DeMasi stated that it would be trench patched only. Selectman Maxwell noted that there have been complaints from residents that it seems sidewalks are being shifted away from the road and thus taking away part of their lawns. Superintendent DeMasi stated that the sidewalks are going to be at the same locations as before but they may be a little wider in places. He reminded the Select Board members that he and the project engineers had recommended limiting parking on Central Street to one side of the road in order to free up more lawn space but this option had been opposed by the residents.

Superintendent DeMasi then stated that the preliminary work on East Street and Turkey Hill Road has just been completed and now the focus will turn to the installation of new water mains along King Street. The Water Department will be working tomorrow on connecting some East Street businesses to new water mains. Manager Schulz added that Turkey Hill Road has been reopened to traffic. There may be some minor delays in the near future but nothing major. Selectman Maxwell asked if there had been any problems with the project so far. Superintendent DeMasi said that some unexpected levels of ledge had been discovered near the intersection of King Street and Turkey Hill Road. Fortunately, the ledge was soft enough that it could be reduced with a hydraulic hammer.

At this time, Water/Sewer Operator Peter J. DeMasi entered the room and privately informed Superintendent DeMasi of a problem on King Street. Superintendent DeMasi left the meeting with him and was unable to return before adjournment.

Selectman Goslant noted that the Town's sweeper had been used to deal with some of the loose gravel in the area adjacent to the Central Street project. He asked why the project crew members were unable to clean up after themselves. Manager Schulz acknowledged that the sweeper was sent out to address the problem in a timely manner. Selectman Gadbois does not want to pay the contractor for cleanup work that the Town ends up doing. Manager Schulz was sure that the crew would have gotten to it in time.

Selectman Gadbois asked if the Town received easements from Central Street residents permitting the construction work around their homes. Manager Schulz confirmed that easements were obtained from all property owners but one. That person refused to sign because he was worried that he would be personally liable should a worker get injured on his property. The project plans were revised slightly in order to work around this property.

Manager Schulz added that the Water Department now is looking into replacing a water line on Water Street near Mayo Healthcare.

- b. **Ambulance Chief Lawton Rutter.** Chief Rutter stated that the Northfield Ambulance Service (NAS) has just completed its first full fiscal year under his leadership. He reported that NAS spent a little more than had been budgeted but this had been more than offset by an unanticipated increase in revenues. For example, there had been almost one hundred (100) more non-emergency transfers than during the previous fiscal year and this, in part, led to a fifteen to twenty percent (15%-20%) increase in revenues over what had been projected. Chief Rutter noted that NAS is more able and willing to accept transport requests from area hospitals than in previous years. In addition, call volume has seen an "across the board" increase with more requests from Norwich University, the local nursing homes, etc.

Chief Rutter added that NAS now is receiving additional calls from Brookfield, which is outside its normal service area. He noted that the Town of Brookfield had become increasingly unhappy with coverage from Whiter River Ambulance and has been using Barre Town Ambulance on a trial basis. NAS also has been providing service to the approximately fifty (50) Brookfield households that are adjacent to Vermont Route 12. Manager Schulz asked if the extra expense would be covered. Chief Rutter stated that the billing department always takes extra costs, i.e. additional mileage, extra time, etc. into account when seeking payment. Should Brookfield become part of the NAS service area, Northfield would be able to bill Brookfield a per capita charge (as with Roxbury, West Berlin, etc.).

Selectman Maxwell asked how NAS is able to take on additional responsibilities at this time. Chief Rutter stated that it was a combination of better volunteer coverage, improved hands-on training, better equipment, and more willingness to reach out to local hospitals, etc. for additional work. Selectman Goslant asked if this increased revenue can be used to cover the cost of new equipment, etc. Chief Rutter said that he will need to track the increase over time to see if it holds up and it is reliable enough and sufficient to fund equipment purchases. Selectman Goslant then complimented Chief Rutter for the excellent work he has done since his appointment.

Chief Rutter then reported that NAS has received a \$5000 VLCT grant that can be used to purchase powered stretchers. He has solicited bid proposals and selected a reliable vendor who quoted a price of \$36,000 for two (2) stretchers. This includes a discount for purchasing more than one at a time and this would allow each of the NAS units to have a new stretcher. The current stretchers have reached the end of their service lives and might require costly repairs in the next year or two (if not replaced). Chief Rutter felt that purchasing both at this time would save money in the long run. However, since the CIP account that would fund this purchase has about \$20,000 in it, even with the VLCT grant there would be about an \$11,000 shortfall in the current budget. Selectman Gadbois would prefer to keep to the budget that was approved. Chief Rutter stated that he had planned to purchase the second stretcher in a couple years but the deal that the vendor is proposing is very attractive, including a "payment plan" at no interest. The stretchers under consideration should last about ten (10) years before replacement. Selectman Maxwell asked if the Board needed to take action on this tonight. Manager Schulz said that additional information would be provided at a future meeting and approval sought at that time. Chief Rutter noted that since purchase of a single stretcher would be within the budget, that would not require Board approval.

- c. **E911 Coordinator Lawton Rutter.** In his other role as E911 Coordinator, Chief Rutter is requesting tonight that the Select Board formally approve names for two (2) private roads. The first request is for the access road to the apartment complex located off Vermont Route 12A south of Norwich University. The complex has been called the "Northfield Apartments" for some time and Chief Rutter would like the access road formally designated as "Northfield Apartments Road." The name was first suggested by property owner David Fernandez and there have been no objections. Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the recommendation that this unnamed private road be formally designated as "Northfield Apartments Road." **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

Chief Rutter stated that his second road name request is more complicated. Honeysuckle Terrace is a private road located off the east side of Vermont Route 12 South between Preston Drive and Lovers Lane. This name was chosen when the initial five (5) lots were developed in this area but has never been formally adopted by the Select Board. Chief Rutter would like the Board to formally approve the road name and also authorize him to determine the correct address numbering for the existing structures. Some homes already have numbers but these do not meet E911 standards, which call for road numbers to correlate to road distance, i.e. a home one-half mile from the road's beginning would be designated 500, etc. The E911 Board also wants unique road names to avoid confusion and Chief Rutter has confirmed that there are no other roads named "Honeysuckle" in the area. Selectman Goslant, who lives on the road, noted that he would have to change his current street address if the renumbering occurs. Chief Rutter added that resident Mark Bolding had wanted to give a separate name to his new driveway but this is not possible since you cannot have one named private road branching off from another. If he wants, Mr. Bolding can purchase and install a private road sign for his driveway but the name would have no legal status. Selectman Gadbois would like to know how the other residents who would be affected feel about the name "Honeysuckle" before the Board takes formal action. Selectman Goslant would not like to delay taking action as the road always has been known as "Honeysuckle Terrace" and he is concerned that without a Board-approved E911 name and accurate addresses in their databases, emergency services might not be able to quickly respond to emergencies. There had been some confusion when there was a brush fire on the mountain last year. Selectman Maxwell would like to delay consideration until the next regular meeting (07/28/15) so that the residents can be contacted and a consensus achieved. Selectman Doney felt that the matter must be resolved at that time. If any resident is not happy with the proposed name, he or she can attend the meeting and say why and suggest an alternative.

- d. **Listers Chair Arlington Supplee.** Mr. Supplee would like the Select Board to fix an error on the recently filed Grant List in regards to the apartment building located at 16 Vine Street. He recently learned that the property owner has a special agreement with the Department of Housing and Urban Development that limits the amount of rent that can be charged. Therefore, Mr. Supplee would like the parcel's value reduced from \$473,100 to \$338,900. Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to make the Grand List correction as indicated above. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **June 23, 2015 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **July 8, 2015 (Special Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VII. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Warrant #02-16.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve Warrant #02-16 in the amount of \$785,387.35. Selectman Doney noted a \$300 water bill for operating the fountain on the Town Common. As this is a waste of both money and water, he would like to have the fountain either converted to recirculate or shut down. Manager Schulz has spoken to Superintendent DeMasi about installing a permanent water recirculator but after seeking estimates, it was Superintendent DeMasi's opinion that it would be cost prohibitive. Selectman Maxwell would like a follow up on this that indicated the various options. Selectman Goslant noted that this issue has come up various times over (at least) the past five (5) years. Selectman Gadbois asked about a \$600 charge for cell phone service. Manager Schulz said that this bill represented a two (2) month service period as he refused to pay the first month's bill until it was revised to match the promises Verizon made prior to the Town's switchover from AT&T. We are now getting the \$100 per month savings that had been promised. Selectman Maxwell would like to know if the \$11,000 annual software licensing payment to MUNIS is justified. Manager Schulz said that there were not many options for municipal finance software programs in this state and that the municipal staff have been trained to use the MUNIS system. He will look into this further.

Chair Quinn arrived at this time.

Chair Quinn asked how the \$11,000 figure was determined. Manager Schulz is not sure but believes that it is based on the number of modules that are used, i.e. payroll, tax payments, etc. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- b. **Warrant #02-16A.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve Warrant #02-16A in the amount of \$45,340.90. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- c. **Approval of Bi-Weekly Payroll through June 21, 2015.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the bi-weekly payroll in the amount of \$88,677.97. Selectman Doney asked why there was so much overtime for the Water and Sewer Departments for this pay period. Manager Schulz will look into this. Selectman Gadbois suggested that it might be the result of the heavy rains we had recently along with the ongoing two (2) water projects. Chair Quinn asked about the amount of Northfield Police Department (NPD) overtime. Manager Schulz believes that it is due to some case work that ran over. He has asked Police Chief James Dziobek to keep an eye on this. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- d. **Approval of Bi-Weekly Payroll through July 5, 2015.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the bi-weekly payroll in the amount of \$89,564.85. Selectman Gadbois asked about NPD holiday pay. Manager Schulz stated that this was part of the current NPD union contract. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VIII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **State Revolving Loan Fund (Water Projects).** Manager Schulz stated that the Town went to the bond bank to receive this twenty (20) year note for the Central/Washington and King Street water projects. The first payment is scheduled for 2018. Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve and sign the General Obligation Bond in the amount of \$1,856,935 at 3.0% interest; to approve and sign the Vermont Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Agreement; and to approve and sign the Vermont Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Resolution and Certificate. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Northfield Observances' Request to hold Labor Day Weekend Car Show.** This is the annual request to close down Water Street from its intersection with North Main Street to Carpenter Street so that a car show can be held in the Kenyon Hardware and Barry T. Chouinard parking lots. This year's show would be on Sunday, September 6, 2015, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. There have been no problems in past years. Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the car show request. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- c. **Northfield Observances' Request to hold Labor Day Weekend Soap Box Derby.** Chair Quinn noted that this request is to close down South Main Street from the Brown Public Library (93 South Main Street) to the intersection with East Street from 9:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. on the morning of Sunday, September 6, 2015. Manager Schulz is concerned about shutting down this section of the road at the same time that the Town Common is closed off. This would necessitate an unwieldy detour along Central Street, Wall Street, Water Street, Vine Street, etc. Chair Quinn believes that Slate Avenue would be a far better location. Selectman Doney also wants to know that the event really will last two (2) full hours. Chair Quinn suggested that consideration of this matter be tabled until Northfield Observances can be contacted to see if they will agree to move the event and/or shorten its duration.

- d. **Approval of Town of Northfield Social Media Policy.** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve and sign the Town of Northfield Social Media Policy. This policy had been distributed for review at the previous meeting and is based upon a VLCT model document. Manager Schulz believes that the municipality should have the right to regulate the social media postings of its employees should the views expressed conflict with official municipal policy. The department heads will monitor the activity of their employees to ensure compliance. Chair Quinn believes that there should be some guidelines when municipal employees use their work accounts and/or work titles to express an opinion on municipal policies, proposed budgets, etc. If this document proves inadequate, it can be revised at a later time. Selectman Goslant agrees that the current situation is out of hand. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- e. **Economic Development Committee Meeting.** Chair Quinn noted that the Committee's next meeting will be on Wednesday, July 15, 2015, at 6:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building. There will be a discussion of the Brownfields state grant that Northfield received and how to ensure that the funds are properly spent.
- f. **Public Hearing (CDBG-DR Grant: FEMA Buyout Program Site Redevelopment): Tuesday, July 28, 2015.** This public hearing will be held at 7:00 p.m. at the beginning of the next regular Select Board meeting.
- g. **Public Hearing (CDBG-DR Grant: Fairground Road Bridge Replacement Project): Tuesday, July 28, 2015.** This public hearing will begin immediately after the first public hearing concludes.

IX. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. **Fairground Road Bridge.** Selectman Maxwell asked if the sidewalks leading to the bridge will be paved. There are just gravel paths at this time. Manager Schulz has been looking into this and will discuss this matter with the engineer during final project inspection next week.
- b. **FEMA Buyout Project.** Selectman Maxwell asked when the last standing buyout structure on Water Street, which had been largely gutted a few weeks ago during live fire training, would be completely razed. Manager Schulz stated that former Zoning Administrator Michele Braun had solicited bid proposals to clean up the site but received no responses. She will be putting this out to bid again and will advertise wider this time. Manager Schulz feels that getting this done should be a priority.
- c. **Roadside Mowing.** Selectman Goslant believes that a number of Northfield backroads have brush and tree limbs imposing on the travel lanes. The State of Vermont subcontracts this work out and he would like the Town of Northfield to consider doing the same. Chair Quinn believes that the delays in getting the work done is not a budget issue but due to time constraints and limited manpower. Manager Schulz plans to talk to the Town of Berlin about how they handle this. He believes that they subcontract the work out for about \$6000 per year.
- d. **Brown Public Library (BPL) Roof repairs.** Selectman Gadbois asked about the status of the planned roof repairs. Manager Schulz said the cost estimates have been received; he and BPL Treasurer John Stevens have been working together on a grant application to the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation.
- e. **Northfield Police Department Organizational Chart.** Selectman Maxwell was grateful to receive the organizational chart that he had requested. He now would like to see the job descriptions for the positions listed. Manager Schulz will collect this information.

X. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT. Manager Schulz had nothing to add to his written report.

XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED). There was none.

XII. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Doney, to adjourn. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Town Manager's Office.

These minutes were approved at the regular Select Board meeting of July 28, 2015.